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Finlay Carson MSP
Convener
Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment
Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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19 April 2022

Dear Finlay,

The Sea Fish (Prohibition on Fishing) (Firth of Clyde) (No. 2) Order 2022 (SSI 2022/35)

Thank you for your letter of 15 March 2022, following my attendance at the RAINE Committee meeting on 9 March 2022. I enclose further details as requested at the meeting and in your follow up letter.

Scientific Data

You requested the scientific data which informed the decision to prohibit fishing activity in the Firth of Clyde, particularly the literature relating to the behaviour of spawning cod. Dr Coby Needle has confirmed that the two key papers used to make our assumption about male cod mating behaviour are the following:

González-Irusta, J. M. and Wright, P. J. (2016). *Spawning ground of Atlantic cod (Gadus morhua) in the North Sea*. ICES Journal of Marine Science, 73(2), 304-315.

Zemeckis, D. (2016) *Spawning dynamics, seasonal movements, and population structure of Atlantic cod (Gadus morhua) in the Gulf of Maine*. Thesis for: Ph.D. Marine Science and Technology, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, School for Marine Science and Technology (SMAST).

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The full list of references was included in Dr Needle's wider submission which I shared with you on 8 March 2022.

Wider Spawning Grounds and Offshore Wind Sites

The Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy (SMP-OWE) adopted in October 2020, identified 15 Plan Options for offshore wind development in Scotland. The SMP-OWE was developed in combination with a series of environmental and socio-economic assessments to identify the potential impacts of offshore wind on the marine environment, communities and protected species. The fishing industry was also consulted during the development of each Plan Option and its feedback helped shape the final configuration of the Plan Options. Known spawning grounds for different fish species have been identified within the SMP-OWE, with a further caveat that potential impacts from offshore wind farm construction, operation and decommissioning should be included in any site specific environmental impact assessment undertaken to support site specific wind farm applications.

Details of the publicly funded organisations involved in the co-management process who campaigned for the removal of the exemptions.

Officials have examined the list of organisations who both responded to the consultation and campaigned for the removal of the exemptions. For those that fit this criteria, they have conducted a targeted internal review to identify public funding to these organisations. The review focused on sectoral funding (marine, food and drink).

The review indicates that the following organisations have received public funding within the last five years. We have also included details of funding from earlier years where records were available.

Organisation	Date	Details of Funding
Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation	2013	£25,000 (Scottish Government (SG))
Associated British Ports - Port of Troon	2017	£30.29 (SG)
Associated British Ports - Port of Troon	2021	£84,413.52 (SG)
Associated British Ports - Port of Troon	2022	£1,356.53 (SG)
COAST	2021	£153,837 (Nature Scot Nature Restoration Fund (NS NRF))
COAST	2021	£63,000 (Island Communities Fund)
SeaWilding	2021	£42,990 (NS NRF)
Open Seas	2021	£6,000 (NS NRF)

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SeaWilding		£145,409 (Nature Scot Biodiversity Challenge Fund (NS BCF))
Argyll Fisheries Trust	2018	£6,915 (SG)
Argyll Fisheries Trust	2019	£29,167 (SG)
Scottish Environment LINK	2017	£520 (SG)
Scottish Environment LINK	2017-18	£37,725 (SG)
Scottish Environment LINK	2017-18	£50,500 (Scottish Natural Heritage SNH)
Scottish Environment LINK	2018	£80 (SG)
Scottish Environment LINK	2018-19	£37,725 (SG)
Scottish Environment LINK	2018-19	£50,500 (SNH)
Scottish Environment LINK	2019	£600 (SG)
Scottish Environment LINK	2019-20	£37,725 (SG)
Scottish Environment LINK	2019-20	£50,500 (SNH)
Scottish Environment LINK	2020-21	£37,500 (SG)
Scottish Environment LINK	2020-21	£50,500 (NS)
Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network	2017	£36,296.01 (SG)
National Trust for Scotland	-	£83,000 (NS BCF))
National Trust for Scotland	2017	£84,193.28 (SG)
National Trust for Scotland	2018	£116,444.98 (SG)
National Trust for Scotland	2019	£42,738.44 (SG)
National Trust for Scotland	2020	£3,953,791.31 (SG)
National Trust for Scotland	2021	£117,923 (SG)
National Trust for Scotland	2022	£26,475 (SG)
University of Glasgow	2021	£44,000 (SG Marine Fund Scotland)

Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups

Finally, the Committee also enquired about our network of Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups (RIFGs), and in particular their engagement with communities and environmental stakeholders.

RIFGs are non-statutory advisory groups designed to give fishers a voice as regards inshore fisheries management. Scotland's inshore fishing businesses are often small-scale independent operators, difficult to reach, and with historically poor representation. RIFGs are specifically aimed at representing these small and often hard-to-reach fishing businesses, many of whom do not benefit from organised professional bodies representing them, for example, a national federation. From their inception, RIFGs have sought to improve the management of Scotland's inshore fisheries through bringing fishers together, to encourage collaboration, and to facilitate discussions with government on improvements to fisheries management. To be clear, the RIFGs are not decision-making bodies and are only one category of fisheries stakeholders whose views the government seeks and considers.

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Our Future Fisheries Strategy National Discussion highlighted positive support for the RIFG network, but noted that it would need to adapt with fishing operating in an increasingly busy shared marine space.

My officials are considering changes to how we communicate and engage with fisheries stakeholders, and this includes assessing if we can streamline engagement across this diverse group of stakeholders. The RIFGs are an important part of our management approach in Scotland, and will very much form part of this work.

I will keep the Committee advised of any developments as regards engagement with fisheries stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON

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